# Diversity@Work

VA U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

**July 2021** 

WWW.VA.GOV/ORMDI

## **Some Upcoming Events**July 2021

**Independence Day** July 4

**DIVAC Quarterly Meeting** 

July 21

**31st Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act** July 26

**National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day** July 27

#### **ORMDI**

#### **Steps Toward Conflict Resolution**

You can contact the Office of Resolution Management, Diversity and Inclusion (ORMDI) toll-free at 1-888-566-3982 (TTY/TDD at 1-888-626-9008) and speak with a specialist regarding EEO Complaint Processing, Alternative Dispute Resolution, and Harassment Prevention. You must initiate contact with an EEO counselor within 45 days of the date of the alleged act of discrimination by calling 1-888-566-3982 or visiting your local ORMDI Field Office.

by integrating the ADA with the evolving health and safety guidelines. ODEP also promotes highly accessible workplaces that can include and empower Federal employees with reportable and targeted disabilities. Likewise, VA steadfastly integrates those affirmative steps in serving our Veterans. VA proudly joins the Nation in commemorating both the 20th anniversary of ODEP and the 31st anniversary of the ADA.

As of the end of May 2021, of VA's total workforce of 425,212 employees, 52,785 (12.41%) have reportable disabilities and 10,429 (2.45%) have targeted disabilities. Of the 126,755 Veterans employed by the VA, 57,160 are Disabled Veterans.

For more information, visit <u>VA's Individuals with Disabilities Employment</u> <u>Program webpage</u> or contact Mr. Roberto Rojo, VA's National Individuals with Disabilities Program Manager.

#### Commemorate

**ADA and ODEP Anniversaries** 

This year marks an important milestone in our Nation's efforts to advance workplace inclusion – the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the <u>Department of Labor</u>, <u>Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP)</u>. Concurrently, it is also a time to reaffirm VA's commitment to driving change and creating opportunities for Americans with Disabilities presently and in the future.

While ODEP was officially established in 2001, its origins date back to 1998 with the White House publication of President William J. Clinton's Executive Order 13078, "Increasing Employment of Adults with Disabilities." Formation of the corresponding Presidential Task Force was catalytic for ODEP to be authorized by Congress in its Fiscal Year 2001 appropriation.

Each year, ODEP names our country's theme for National Disability Employment Awareness Month in October. ODEP announces the 2021 theme as "America's Recovery: Powered by Inclusion" and aligns the theme with the Americans with

Disabilities Act (ADA), which was signed on July 26, 1990. In fostering America's recovery, ODEP continues to be on the forefront



ODEP

Office of Disability Employment Policy

### Message from the DAS

Harvey Johnson, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Resolution Management, Diversity and Inclusion



DAS Johnson, ORMDI

Greetings, VA! Please join me in congratulating the winners of the Ninth Annual Secretary's Diversity and Inclusion Excellence and Alternative Dispute Resolution Excellence Awards! You can read about the winners and their achievements later in this issue. ORMDI received over 50 nominations this year from across all three Administrations and some Staff Offices that highlighted best practices across the Department. I want to thank all of the nominees for their dedication and accomplishments!

The Office of Resolution Management, Diversity and Inclusion (ORMDI) has been hard at work preparing VA's response to numerous executive orders (EO) including EO 13985 (<u>Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government</u>), EO 13988 (<u>Preventing and Combating Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity or Sexual Orientation</u>), and EO 14031 (<u>Advancing Equity</u>, Justice and Opportunity for Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians

<u>and Pacific Islanders</u>) and the earlier <u>Memorandum Condemning and Combating Racism, Xenophobia, and Intolerance</u> Against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the United States.

I am excited to share that one result of these efforts is that VA is in the process of establishing two employee resource groups (ERG). The first is the Federal Women's Program Coalition which, among other proposed goals, seeks to: research, document, and rank the foremost significant challenges facing women employed by or seeking careers in VA; recommend viable strategies to address those challenges determined to have urgency or criticality; and report results to the co-chairs and voting members of the <u>Diversity and Inclusion in VA Council</u> for deliberation and approval. VA employees interested in joining or learning more can contact Ms. Sehar Minhas, VA's National Federal Women's Program Manager, ORMDI.

On June 29, our new Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration/Operations, Security and Preparedness, Gina Grosso, announced the establishment of the PrideVA Employee Resource Group for gender and sexual minorities, including, but not limited to, those identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ+) and related identities, as well as allies. The PrideVA ERG is organized to empower members, improve access and strengthen outcomes for VA employees. Membership is open to all VA employees, contractors, volunteers and retirees.

As we close out Pride Month activities, I'd like to recognize the incredibly creative and determined VA employees collectively named "VA United for Equality" who made it possible for VA to celebrate its first enterprise-wide Virtual Pride Month. I hope you were able to attend some if not all of those informative events. Recordings and materials will continue to be made available beyond June. For information on how to access the Teams channel or on PrideVA, email Mr. Sterling Akins, VA's National LGBT Program Manager, ORMDI.

Finally, I wanted to share this striking photograph of Secretary Denis McDonough raising the Pride flag over VA Central Office for the first time, "demonstrating VA's commitment to inclusion, diversity, equity, and access to services for all Veterans."

I am proud of how far we have come and am inspired to continue this great work as I hope you are!

Photograph by Gene Russell



## The Ninth Annual Secretary's D&I Excellence and ADR Excellence Awards

**Congratulations to the Winners!** 

ORMDI is proud to announce the winners of the Ninth Annual Secretary's Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Excellence and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Excellence Awards! These awards recognize the outstanding work of VA employees and teams who have achieved sustained successes in the areas of D&I and ADR.

This year, the Secretary's D&I Excellence Award is awarded in four categories. The awardees are:

- Latoria Thompson, Equal Employment Opportunity Program Manager, Columbia VA Health Care System, South Carolina, Veterans Health Administration (VHA) (Category: Equal Employment Opportunity/Diversity & Inclusion Practitioner)
- David Isaacks, Executive Director, Kansas City VA Medical Center, Missouri, VHA (Category: Manager/Supervisor)
- **Dr. Donna Price**, Clinical Psychologist, Phoenix VA Health Care System, Arizona, VHA (Category: Nonsupervisory Employee)
- Office of Community Care, Equal Employment Opportunity/Diversity and Inclusion Team, VHA (Category: Team)

This year, the ADR Excellence Award is also being awarded in four categories. The awardees are:

- Taranio Byrd, Mental Health, Program Manager, VA Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System, Arkansas, VHA (Category: Individual Effort by a Manager)
- Nancy Daniels, LCSW, Boise VA Medical Center, Idaho, VHA (Category: Individual Effort by a Certified Neutral)
- **Scott Barrett**, National Reasonable Accommodation Consultant, VA Central Office, Washington, DC, Office of Information and Technology (Category: Individual Effort by An Employee, Not a Certified Neutral)
- Nebraska Western Iowa Health Care System (NWIHCS) ADR Team, NWIHCS Omaha Campus, Nebraska, VHA (Category: Team - Workplace ADR Program)

A video highlighting the accomplishments of the awardees will be shared on the <u>D&I Excellence Awards webpage</u> and the <u>ADR Excellence Awards webpage</u> in the coming weeks. Congratulations to all of the award winners for their outstanding achievements in support of D&I and ADR!

### **Pronoun Use in Email Signatures**

Contributed by VA's Office of Information and Technology and Mr. Sterling Akins, VA's Departmental LGBTQ+ Program Manager, ORMDI

At VA, diversity is our strength and the key to continued innovation. We celebrate all voices and experiences that make up our Great Nation, those we serve, and our colleagues and federal counterparts.

Correctly using pronouns is one of the most basic ways we show respect and cultivate an inclusive culture at VA. When someone is referred to with the wrong pronoun, it can make them feel disrespected and alienated in the workplace. Repeated, intentional or deliberate misuse of incorrect pronouns can be a potential source of great distress. Furthermore, it can also be subject to discriminatory actions under Title VII, which puts the Agency at risk.

Normalizing pronouns also helps protect trans and gender diverse colleagues from discrimination and harassment. Pronouns include, but are not limited to:

- he/him/his (masculine pronouns)
- she/her/hers (feminine pronouns)
- they/them/theirs (neutral pronouns)

One of the easiest ways to normalize the use of pronouns and be an ally to your LGBTQ+ colleagues is to include your own pronouns in your email signature in parenthesis after your name. Other ways normalize pronouns in the workplace:

- Include your pronouns in your LinkedIn profile by adding them after your last name.
- Ask people politely what pronouns they use don't assume pronouns based on appearance or name.
- If you get pronouns or a name wrong, apologize for the mistake, privately, and try to get it right next time.
- Educate yourself, be an active ally and help others understand why this is important.

For more information on VA's LGBTQ+ program, visit <u>VA's LGBTQ+ Program webpage</u> or contact Mr. Sterling Akins, VA's Departmental LGBTQ+ Program Manager, ORMDI.



## Department of Veterans Affairs

Office of Resolution Management, Diversity & Inclusion

The Workforce Analytics Team presents

VA Workforce Diversity - May 2021

Includes U.S. Citizens perm. and temp. in pay status: excludes medical residents.

workforcedatarequest@va.gov

https://www.va.gov/ormdi/

## 🔀 BY THE NUMBERS



Onboard: 425,212

Men

163,215 (38.38%)

Women

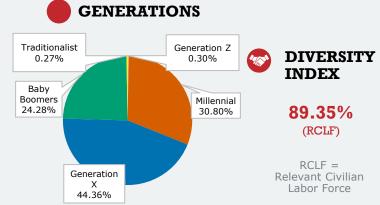
261,997 (61.62%)

**Employees** with

10,429 (2.45%) have Targeted Disabilities

Disabilities

Above established goals!



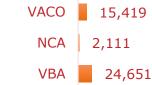
## VETERANS



Non-Disabled Veteran 69,595

Disabled Veteran 57,160

### **ADMINISTRATIONS**



VHA/VCS

382,974

## TOP MISSION CRITICAL **OCCUPATIONS**







## EDUCATION

**High School** - 54,567 **BA/BS Degree** - 99,630 **Professional Degree** - 14,656 0-0-0-0-0-0-0

Graduate/Advanced Degree - 119,669 000000

🗘 LEADERSHIP (SES & TITLE-38 EQUIVALENTS)

2210 -

Specialist

503 Total **Members**  36.99% Female

7.95% Have a Disability 24.07% Minority

#### **Training**

#### Federally Employed Women's Second Virtual Leadership Summit

Federally Employed Women (FEW) will hold its second Virtual Leadership Summit on August 9-13, 2021. The theme for this summit is "Soaring to New Heights." FEW is a private membership organization working as an advocacy group to improve the status of women employed by the Federal Government, with a focus on four major program areas: compliance, diversity, legislative and training. The summit will offer workshops on equal employment opportunity, human resources, information technology, management and leadership, and courses that address the Executive Core Qualifications required for the Senior Executive Service. VA employees who plan to attend are responsible for obtaining supervisory approvals. Please note that centralized funding is not available for attendance. Funding for registration must come from the employee's benefitting program office. Following supervisory and budget approval, attendees who plan to participate must also register on the <a href="#FEW website">FEW website</a>. For more information, contact Ms. Sehar Minhas, VA's National Federal Women's Program Manager, ORMDI.

#### **Blacks In Government National Training Institute Summit**

This year's Annual Blacks In Government (BIG) National Training Institute (NTI) will take place August 23 -26, 2021, on a virtual platform due to COVID. This year's theme is "Training Matters – Roadmap To Securing Your Career Goals!" BIG has four scheduled days filled with government leaders as guest speakers and workshops covering leadership development, career advancement, networking and mental/health resilience. VA employees who plan to attend are responsible for obtaining supervisory approvals. Please note that centralized funding is not available for attendance. Funding for registration must come from the employee's benefitting program office. Following supervisory and budget approval, attendees who plan to participate must also register on the BIG website. For more information, contact Ms. Tynnetta Lee, VA's Departmental Black/African American Special Emphasis Program Manager, ORMDI.

#### **Overview of the Harassment Prevention Program**

ORMDI hosts "Overview of the Harassment Prevention Program (HPP)" the first Wednesday of each month from 10 to 11 a.m. and 2 to 3 p.m. (ET). Register on the Talent Management System (TMS VA 4563938).

#### **ADR Awareness**

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Awareness provides information on EEO laws, regulations, and theories of discrimination that govern the EEO complaint process. It provides a basic understanding of conflict, the underlying causes of conflict, and how ADR can be used to resolve disputes. ADR Awareness training (TMS VA 4517625) will be held July 14 and 21 from 11 a.m. to noon and 1 to 2 p.m.

#### **Workplace Civility**

Workplace Civility training will be held August 11 and 18. Training for Managers (TMS VA 4559059) is 11 a.m. to noon and training for Employees (TMS VA 4504880) is 1 to 2 p.m.

#### The Audacity to Fail Podcast

The <u>Audacity to Fail Podcast: misStepping Into Success</u> focuses on discovering leadership wisdom through experiences with failures and missteps. The podcasts dive into conversations and stories from leaders as they share that failure activates a growth mindset, is an important part of learning and motivation for improvement! For the June episode, Dr. Shari Dade chats about workload with Bobbi Jo Nye, the Training and Exercise Branch Chief of the VHA Office of Emergency Management. Bobbi Jo manages multiple program and statutory initiatives ensuring that effective and efficient critical emergency management training and exercise support is provided to key stakeholders internal and external to VHA. Bobbi Jo shares the missteps leaders can make when facing the challenges that may be attached to successfully managing the load of work in their workgroup or service. The series is also available on the <u>Talent Management System</u>.



Office of Human Resources & Administration/Operations, Security, and Preparedness
Office of Resolution Management, Diversity and Inclusion (ORMDI)
Alternative Dispute Resolution | EEO Complaint Processing | Harassment Prevention Program
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